

February 17, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pleasure that I write a letter in support of the **Before and After School Programs (BASP)** at Windham Public Schools. These have become an essential part of the overall school day for hundreds of our students, and there is usually a waiting list of students looking to participate in the program. The students enjoy the program and have been observed engaged in academic as well as recreational activities. The only parent complaint we hear is that the kids enjoy the program so much, they do not want to leave early – even to go home!

The BASP provides many structured, social activities that engage students with their neighborhood peers. This would not occur without BASP, as we are a low-income system and parents do not always have the resources and opportunities to create such venues. This program has been well-received by parents as evidenced by their participation in the Parent and Family Night activities that the BASP has provided. These late night activities include plays and presentations put on by the students and coordinated by the BASP staff. The timing of these activities allows for parents to see their children participate in school-based activities without taking time off from their work schedules. A positive academic and social atmosphere is the result of each event.

To reinforce literacy and math, students receive 3 hours of reading and math tutoring each week after school. They have structured PE/Health interventions, regular “read aloud” time, and focused homework time. Student work from the programs is often displayed in the cafeteria; as well as decorating the hallway, demonstrating themes and concepts they are learning. The availability of these displays allows students and parents to see that the BASP program is an extension of the school day, with the same academic and behavioral expectations, but with enrichment activities that complement the regular school day.

We are privileged to have these programs at our schools in Windham. In a priority school district such as ours it is becoming an integral part of closing the achievement gap. It also creates additional educational and social opportunities that teach our students skills they can use in the future and model at home and in the community.

If I can assist in any other way to ensure that this program continues, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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